1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

[Boys] [GIRLS] 857

LIVELIHOOD IN SILWA

FROM SEVEN TO TWELVE[1]

Before the introduction of compulsory schooling and perennial irrigation, the specific responsibility for this period was irrigation—he still helps with it in the afternoon.

Collects leaves, clover, grass, and weeds for feeding the animals, takes animals to water, as tending animals is his main responsibility, whether at home or in the field.

Fetches drinking water on donkey-back.

Helps in harvesting.

Helps in digging land, breaking up clods with the hoe as an introduction to his use of implements.

Takes out and leads his blind or old father or grandfather.

Takes corn on donkey-back to the mill to be ground.

Tasks of previous period if no younger sibling in the family.

Establishment of tasks of preceding period, and helping mother in food preparation.

Fetches water from the Nile in a larger jar, as towards end of this period she can balance the filled jar on head without support of hands. [312] [482] [231]

Takes midday meal to the field, and brings home dates and vegetables.

Helps mother in attending to poultry and sheep, searches for straying sheep or chicken outside. [233]

Daughters of widowed women, or men who are not actually engaged in farming, gather fuel from along the roads. [848] [312]

Brings home 'clay' from the Nile or the field to help mother in building or repairing the oven, the pigeon-cote the fireplace and the earthen store for seeds.

Carries corn on her head to the mill. [482]

FROM TWELVE TO SIXTEEN 883

Fertilizer-fetching is the main responsibility. Father is responsible for the work on the land, while son is responsible for carrying fertilizer from the hill.

Rears with special attention animals allocated to him: calf, small camel . . . as an investment for his marriage-payment.

Makes ropes by twisting fibre of the palm trunk.

'Sea' is one of her main responsibilities, which means water-fetching from Nile mainly at night. [241]

Occasionally takes women's washing as well as her own to be washed in the Nile [296]

Sieves flour, sews and cooks. [231]

Heats the oven, kneads and bakes. [422]

Hair-dehousing. [515]

Wool spinning and yarning.

Makes plate and dish covers out of palm leaves, and dolls to ornament her future house. [283] [285]

Errand-going decreases to the minimum.

May get married before sixteen. [582]

[1] This is the period where compulsory schooling has interfered with the traditional activities of children. 871

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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Silwa

The boy's family bought an outfit for the girl [584] [591]
outer garments (tobs) and two colourful patterned gallabiahs. Together with the girl's outfit, a tob and a gallabiah were bought for the mother and a gallabiah for each of the bride's younger brothers.

Two days before the actual night of marriage, the bridegroom and some of his male relatives and friends who were unmarried went around distributing invitations to those the family wished to invite. Those invited would be expected to contribute during the forthcoming ceremony of 'haircutting' as in case of circumcision ceremonies.

The appointed day arrived, and began with the female celebration in [585] [431]
the bridegroom's house. Women came with corn on their trays as their contribution to the mother who, in return, placed on the tray a loaf of wheat bread or a part of it and a piece of meat according to the contribution received.[1] During this exchange of gifts which took place between the late morning and the late afternoon, the boy's house looked very busy, but with hardly any men about. Women were singing and calling out their joy-cries and exchanging the good wishes.

In the late afternoon the girl invited her friends for the jar-filling ritual. [585]
Accompanied by four other girls the bride took her jar to the Nile, and on this occasion, as is the custom, she was allowed to linger as much as she liked on her journey to the Nile, provided she came back before sunset. [515]
On her arrival home she washed herself completely, was rubbed with henna and perfume by her mother and was wrapped in a woman's cover (twada), her face not being seen by anyone except her very close female relatives, e.g. mother, grandmother, maternal aunt.[2] She was then surrounded by a group of girls of her age who began entertaining her by playing on the tambourine, and singing the traditional songs of the occasion. The following is an example: [533]

> How pretty is the one we are entertaining,
> How we are admiring her.
> The snake in his hole
> has spent a sleepless night.
> He kept one eye on her forehead,
> and the other on her anklets.[3]

In the bridegroom's house there was the preparation for the procession round the village to take place before the evening prayer. The procession was led by some religious men beating on their drums and tambourines while chanting hymns of praise to the Prophet. On the way, and on arriving at the mosque, dates and sweets were distributed and children usually find such occasions most exciting when they scramble for their booty.

[1] It was here that the boy's paternal uncle's wife and some of her friends had a row with the boy's mother over what they ought to have received for their contribution. [578]

[2] Even the father himself is not supposed to see her face.

[3] The snake is presumably the symbol of the husband, who has been admiring the girl from top to toe.

[See category 116, p. 193 -- Aug 1955]

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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Upper Egypt

CHAPTER II

THE WOMEN AND CHILDREN

562 114 FOREIGNERS are often heard talking about "the poor oppressed Egyptian woman." She is spoken of as overworked and ill-treated, and her husband as a brute without feeling or thought for her. I would have my readers bear in mind that in this book I am dealing only with the *felláḥin*; I have no intention of discussing or criticizing the aspirations for emancipation which are now finding voice among many Egyptian ladies of the upper classes. What I have to say here concerns the peasants only, among whom I have sojourned for several years. No one is more anxious than I am to see the status of Egyptian women raised, for until they are made fit to hold a higher position in their world there is, I think, little chance of the country taking a more exalted place among the nations of the earth.

868 562 [872] The girls' education should be entirely practical to start with, and book-learning should come by slow degrees. They should be taught the best way of carrying out their domestic duties, which are, after all, very simple—how to cook their food in a cleanly way, [863] to realize that hands should be carefully washed before handling food or mixing the flour and kneading the dough for bread, and [515] that a *clean*, not a dirty, dress should be worn when they are [852] engaged in any culinary operation. They should also be made to realize that if they would spend but half an hour to an hour every morning sweeping their mud floors and the ground outside their [356] house-doors, and then burning the refuse, they would have both healthier and brighter homes and villages. At present they are [744] without the most elementary knowledge of hygiene, and are unmethodical in the carrying out of most, if not all, their domestic duties. It is in matters such as these that the village girls need instruction first and foremost.

562 The somewhat inferior position that the peasant women occupy in village society compared with that of the men follows as a natural consequence of their greater ignorance.

THE FELLÂḤÎN OF UPPER EGYPT

I fancy that there was really no just cause for the woman's jealous suspicions. However, she has reduced her husband to a state of abject fear lest he may arouse her anger—though I did hear that on one occasion he had plucked up sufficient courage to exercise his 'rights' as a husband, and so had administered a whipping for some fault she had committed!

With regard to the division of labour among the sexes, the men certainly have the hardest and largest share, the most strenuous work in the fields being invariably done by them. The women and girls join their menfolk in the cultivation after the sun has risen, but their work is usually confined to the gathering of dry roots, tending the cattle, fetching the water for the household (Fig. 16), and so on. Of course, living is simple among the peasants, so that very strenuous work for the women is not necessary. Much, however, that might be done by them is neglected simply because they are without training in domestic duties and do not realize what important work lies to their hands.

It is, of course, very difficult for the peasants to be as clean as they should be. All the water has to be fetched by the women, often from some distance. No water is laid on in the villages, no bathrooms exist, and the houses lack the most ordinary domestic offices. Excuses must, therefore, be made for the Egyptian women, who have had none of the advantages of the poorest woman in England. The instinct of the Egyptian *fellāḥīn*, however, is to be clean, and the religion of Islām commands ablutions. A man will almost instinctively strip and bathe if he happens to be near a canal or the river, but this privilege is denied to the women, as modesty forbids their bathing in public.

One of the most crying needs in Egypt is that both girls and women should have instruction in the care and upbringing of children. The children undergo a great deal of unnecessary suffering during the early years of their infancy; not because their mothers are lacking in affection, for Egyptian women are, as a rule, devoted mothers, but because they are so hopelessly ignorant.

The results of such ignorance more often than not leave an indelible mark on the child, such as defective eyesight or even absolute blindness. To prevent or cure disease in their children the women will go to one magician after another and purchase from them amulets and written charms, not grudging for a moment the expenditure of what may be to them considerable sums of money.

[Text continues on page 42]

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Numbers of these prophylactics may be seen hanging from the necks of the hapless infants.

The various primitive medicinal remedies, well known to, and used by, all village matrons, are of such a nature that one wonders how any child manages to survive at all. Most of the women have a deeply rooted objection to going to a doctor for advice, supposing one to be available in the neighbourhood ; and I have found it hard work to overcome this prejudice, even in the case of people who know me well and who have every confidence in me. It is encouraging to hear that the Egyptian Government has recently allocated a certain sum of money for the purpose of starting baby-welfare centres. If only these institutions can be got into good working order, and can be utilized for the purpose of training young girls in the proper care and management of children, it will be a big step in the right direction, will ensure a much stronger and healthier peasantry, and will put an end to a vast amount of unnecessary suffering. During the years I have lived among these people I have had hundreds of sick children of all ages brought to me, and it has been heartbreaking to realize, as having had no medical training I inevitably must, that I am quite incapable of dealing with the terrible diseases from which they are often suffering. As will be seen in some of the subsequent chapters, a great deal of this sickness is due to superstition—taboos against washing, for instance, being very strict.

Much good has, of course, been done by the dispensaries, which in the past were run by Englishwomen ; but they are naturally limited in number, and the mothers will often defer taking their children there for advice and medicine till it is almost too late, or, at any rate, till the child has become very ill indeed. I myself had the privilege of seeing something of what was accomplished by an English lady at one of these dispensaries during the first three or four years that I resided in Egypt. I can bear witness to the splendid work she did, and I know how much she was loved and respected by the hundreds of poor women who brought their children to her for treatment. I am sure, from what I have heard of similar institutions in other parts of the country, that the same good work has been done by many others in the different provinces. The number of these dispensaries is not great enough to meet the crying need, and those that do exist have to be supported by funds from the Government, for they receive practically no support, so

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being treated in this manner, and it seemed to be a somewhat painful process. However, "*Il faut souffrir pour être belle*," and these women do endure considerable discomfort in the course of their toilet.

The toffee-like substance described above is also used by women in a similar way in order to pull out any hairs that may be growing on their legs.

Most women and girls paint round the eyes with antimony (Arabic, *kohl*). It is kept in a small bottle, generally of glass, called *mikḥaleh*, and is applied with a short stick with a blunt point. It is regarded not only as a beautifier, but also as a cure for sore eyes.

Scent is used by both sexes, some of it being of a very pungent nature. In some parts of Egypt it is taboo for a man to use scent while his wife is suckling her child. If he disobeys this rule the child, it is said, will come out all over in spots. A man whom I knew well used some scent on one occasion while his wife was still suckling their youngest-born. The child got nasty spots all over its body, and the mother told me that it was her husband's fault, because he had been putting some scent on his moustache!

I have sometimes heard English people remark on the dirty habit that the Egyptian peasant women have of wearing long dresses which trail over the ground, brushing up the dust in clouds as they go along. It is, of course, a very insanitary practice, but the wearing of short skirts would be looked upon as most immodest. A woman's legs should never be exposed, except from dire necessity. There is also another reason for the trailing skirts. Most peasant women walk barefooted, and so leave clearly defined footprints in the dry, dusty soil. A woman can be injured magically through her foot-prints, and so the long skirt acts as a safeguard, brushing over and thus obliterating them.

Little girls wear very bright-coloured cotton frocks, which reach almost to the ground (see Fig. 17). The women and older girls may wear such frocks indoors, but when they walk abroad, either to shop, to fill their water-jars, or to visit their friends, they wear a long black dress over the coloured one, and a thick veil, shawl-shaped, over their heads.

I was told by a friend some few years ago that in Sharḳiyeh Province the women wear long white veils, on which are several gold or silver ornaments. These ornaments are in the form of

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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ledge this woman is of an exceedingly jealous disposition, which no doubt accounts for that particular trait being exhibited in her *ukht*! Her husband is a decent man, but I have had no opportunity of judging as to whether he is jealous or not. However, one must presume that he is so, in view of the fact that his *ukht* appears to possess this quality in so marked a degree!

As will be seen below on p. 186, some of the subterranean beings also have each an *ukht*.

FIG. 34. CHILD WEARING FROCK AND HOOD OF SACKING

A woman remains unclean for forty days after giving birth to a boy and for thirty days if the child is a girl. I have also been informed that the husband must not enter the room occupied by his wife for seven days after the birth, and that if he wishes to speak to her he must do so from a distance. I am not sure if this is always the rule, but it is so among some of the *fellāḥīn*.

A child is not washed at all until the seventh day after birth, and then the face, hands, and feet only are washed. When I endeavoured to make the women understand how unhealthy this was they declared that they were afraid to wash a child until it was seven days old, and then only to the limited extent just mentioned, for fear of its catching cold. On one occasion a child was brought to me in a most filthy state, and covered from head to foot with suppurating sores. I told the mother that I would not give her any medicine until she had washed the child. On hearing this she became terribly distressed, and declared that she could not wash it. I remained firm, however, in my refusal to give her anything until she had made the child cleaner. It transpired that the child's father had had spots on his body when he was younger,

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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and from what the woman said I fear that it was syphilis from which he was suffering. Anyhow, she told me that if the father or mother suffered in this way their children were never washed at all until they were old enough to wash themselves. Two doctor friends of mine confirmed this, stating that they knew the practice to be a common one among the peasants. As for the child which was brought to me, I am glad to say that I at last persuaded the mother to wash it to a certain extent, and I gave her some medicine. This happened a few years ago, and on my visiting the same village again some time later I was glad to hear that the child was well and flourishing.

FIG. 35. FROCK AND HOOD MADE OF SACKING

The same woman had lost several children in early infancy before this particular infant was born. The child was wearing a peculiar dress, made of sacking, and with a hood in one piece with the frock (Fig. 34). The woman informed me, and I have been told the same thing by others, that this dress was put on the child to make it live. The dress must always be made out of a sack which has contained raw cotton; no other kind will do. Two such dresses were made and given to me (see Fig. 35).

On the seventh day after the birth a midwife comes and washes the child, as stated above, and also the mother. The water used

THE FELLĀḤÎN OF UPPER EGYPT

842 789 [841] If a woman when she gives birth to a child does not want to conceive again for some time she takes some date stones and covers them with some of the blood of her confinement, and then, tying them up in a rag, conceals them in a wall of her house between the bricks. The chink is then stopped up with clay. Each date stone she thus conceals represents a year, and the number, of course, varies according to the number of years she wishes to remain without offspring. When she wishes to have a child again she removes the date stones from their hiding-place, steps over them seven times, and then, placing them in water, bathes in it. I had the opportunity of witnessing such a performance once. The woman, to enable me to take a photograph in a better light, placed the date stones on the threshold of her house, and then stepped over them. Some of these date stones, with the rag in which they had been tied up, were afterward given to me.

842 754 789 [791] A man who is well known to me divorced one of his two wives a year or so ago, and this woman resolved to have her revenge on the other wife. She accomplished her purpose in the following manner. She consulted a female magician, who wrote a spell on an egg and another on a palm-leaf. A male member of the divorced woman's family (probably her brother) took the egg and the leaf and hid them in a tomb. The hiding-place is kept secret, so that no one can remove them, for if they were discovered and taken away they would no longer remain effective. It has come to the knowledge of the man's wife that the divorced woman has acted in this way, and the spells, so she says, have made it impossible for her to bear a child. Possibly the firm belief she has in the potency [758] of such spells has brought her into a neuropathic condition.

842 164 163 ● 515 The fact that so many methods of curing barrenness are employed by the peasants is an indication that, despite the high birth-rate, infertility in women is not uncommon in Egypt. As has been pointed out to me by a doctor who is in daily touch with the poor, venereal disease, which is, unfortunately, very prevalent in some villages, is largely responsible for this state of affairs. A proper organization, involving treatment and instruction in simple hygiene—at present, so far as I know, entirely lacking in the country places—is badly needed to prevent the further spread of this terrible scourge.

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2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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mourning, which could easily be distinguished by the number of men seated outside it; these observed almost complete silence, instead of carrying on an animated conversation as they would have done in happier circumstances.

I was courteously received by the men and conducted to the apartment in which the women were assembled. The house was one of the type always to be found in Egyptian villages, built of crude bricks, and with steep, rough steps inside the building leading up to the roof. In the first room which we entered lay the coffin—a long, narrow box, made of planks of wood hastily nailed together, over which was stretched a covering of black cloth decorated with white crosses and other designs in *appliqué*. We passed through this room into an inner apartment, in which a large number of women were sitting on the ground, uttering from time to time piercing cries of grief. The sister of the dead man came toward me, her hair and dress dishevelled. As she advanced she swayed from side to side in a kind of dance, keeping both arms extended. She at once conducted me into a small room which led out of that occupied by the women. It was dark except for a glimmer of light which penetrated through the half-open door. A mattress was on the floor—indeed, it occupied most of the available space—and on it was stretched the body of the dead man, covered with a coloured sheet. From the end of the room, which was in pitch darkness, came the piercing cries of wailing women. Presently the sister drew aside the coverlet and invited me to take a seat on the mattress beside the dead man. This was no doubt very polite of her, but it was rather more than I could stand—not that I feared the dead, but because the mattress was almost certain to be covered with vermin. I managed to evade the offer without hurting anyone's feelings, and returned to the larger concourse of women in the adjoining room. Each of these women had a coloured handkerchief—green, blue, or purple, or some of these colours combined—such as are carried by women at all funerary ceremonies. Some of them possessed two such handkerchiefs knotted together. They held them in front of them, stretched out at full length, and as they swayed from side to side, wailing and bemoaning the dead, they would wave the handkerchiefs up and down. The faces of the women, as well as their hands and arms, were smeared with blue dye.

Presently I went out to speak to the men, who evidently dis-

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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Mu'awwad; another is a man called el-Akhras (the dumb one), while two others are women, one of whom bears the name of el-Haggeh. The last-named is the most important of all, but she never comes up above ground, and Zedimāl is her servant.

This magician, I learned, must always be very clean both in her person and in her clothes. If she wears a single garment that is dirty the male familiar, el-Akhras, comes up from beneath the earth and possesses her. He seizes her so that she falls on to the ground, shaking all over, and is unable to eat or move. On such occasions her sons will sit down near her, begging her to tell them what is the matter. Then Zedimāl comes up (I was not told how she was brought up) and stops all the anger. The magician must at once remove the dirty garment and put on clean clothes. There are only two colours, besides black, that she may wear—green and red. When I went to Egypt last autumn I took her a silk handkerchief. I chose a purple one, thinking that that colour would be a suitable one for a widow, but this had to be changed for one of the two colours permitted to her.

FIG. 114. THE FEMALE MAGICIAN WHO HAS FIVE FAMILIARS

A *ṣulḥeh*[1] is a sort of peace-making feast, and it is sometimes held by people who have appeased the sheikh or sheikheh by whom they may be possessed. When a man wants a *ṣulḥeh* this woman magician dresses in men's clothes and wears a silk scarf such as is worn by the men, and carries in her hand a stick with a silver knob. If it is a woman who requires the *ṣulḥeh* the magician wears her own clothes. This ceremony is described later (p. 199). When I last saw this magician there was trouble between el-Akhras, her male familiar, and his *ukht*,[2] for each person beneath the earth has an *ukht*. El-Akhras wanted to have a *ṣulḥeh*,

[1] *Ṣulḥ* = peace; *ṣālaḥ* = to make peace with.

[2] See pp. 74 ff.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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CHAPTER XII

THE VILLAGE MEDICINE-MAN AND MEDICINE-WOMAN

THE village magician, whether male or female, often combines the practice of medicine with that of magic; indeed, it is difficult in many cases to distinguish the one from the other, so closely are they allied. Many of the cures are magic pure and simple, and when some herbal mixture is prescribed it is, more often than not, administered by the village 'doctor' to the accompaniment of the recitation of some magic spell. Without this addition many of the peasants would consider the medicine valueless so great is their belief in the efficacy of magic!

In a village where I have often resided for two or three months at a time there lives a woman who is renowned for her goodness. All her fellow-villagers have the greatest faith in her, and sick people beg her to come to them and cure them. She sits down or stands by the sufferer, and, holding a short length of dry maize-stalk, passes it round and round his or her head, repeating prayers and passages from the Ḳorān (Fig. 121). The stalk must then be either burned in a fire or thrown into running water. It is believed that the complaint passes into the stalk and is destroyed in the fire or carried away by the water. Twice over, when I was unwell, this woman was asked by one of my village friends to pay me a visit. On both occasions she acceded to the request, and, after she had finished her performance, the stalks were burned, and my friend declared that she soon noticed a decided improvement in my condition.

It can be readily understood that in these Egyptian villages, where dust and flies abound, and where the villagers themselves are so ignorant of hygiene, eye-troubles are very common. It is appalling to see how defective is the eyesight of many people of the peasant class and the amount of eye-disease, if not actual blindness, that prevails; and all this in spite of really excellent eye-hospitals controlled by the Government. Unfortunately, the seeds of disease are sown in childhood, and even babyhood. Until the women

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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are less ignorant, and learn to realize the importance of keeping their babies clean, it will be difficult, if not impossible, for the doctors to combat the many eye-diseases that cause so much suffering to hundreds of the peasants. With conditions as they are, cures for sore and inflamed eyes are much in demand and are numerous. The following are some of the remedies for eye-trouble employed by the village medicine-man or medicine-woman.

FIG. 151.—A MEDICINE-WOMAN PASSING A PIECE OF MAIZE-STALK ROUND A FEMALE PATIENT'S HEAD TO CURE HER OF ILLNESS

The medicine-woman whose methods of healing I described above has a great reputation as an eye-doctor. Those who suffer from inflamed eyes and swollen eyelids often resort to her for treatment. She takes a lump of sugar, and, turning back the inflamed eyelid, rubs it inside with the sugar. "Black blood" comes away after this operation, so I was told. She then takes a large onion, extracts the juice, and mixes with it some salt. This concoction she drops into the eyes of her patient. "It is very painful," my informant told me, but she added that it did a lot of good. While the woman is rubbing the inside of the eyelid with the lump of sugar her patients often stop up their ears with their fingers, as this is supposed to decrease the pain of the operation. For three days afterward the eye, or eyes, must be kept covered with a handkerchief, so that no air can get in. At the end of the three days the woman gives her patient a second dose of the onion

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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CHAPTER XIII

THE EVIL EYE AND OTHER SUPERSTITIONS

IN the preceding chapter I referred to the neglected condition of the children, partly due to the women's utter ignorance of hygiene and also to the fact that facilities for keeping themselves and their children clean are practically non-existent in Egyptian villages. My readers must bear in mind that all the water, for whatever purpose it may be required, has to be fetched by the women from the Nile, or a canal, or even some dirty pool, all of which may be situated at some distance from their homes. But the main reason for the children being so dirty is the belief in, and dread of, the evil eye, or eye of envy, which is to be found practically all over the world. It has not even died out in modern England, where, to my own knowledge, it exists in parts of the eastern counties, and it may possibly exist in other counties also. To the Egyptian peasants the fear of the evil eye is a very real terror from infancy to old age, and on that account it is considered unwise to let a child look too beautiful in case some one may cast the eye of envy over it. Certainly the dirt allowed to accumulate on some of these poor little specimens of humanity should afford a very effective protection against any and every evil eye!

To counteract this baneful influence innumerable methods are adopted, of which I will give a few examples.

If after a woman has received a visit from friends and neighbours her child shows signs of illness she immediately thinks that one of her guests has cast the evil eye on it. She accordingly cuts out a human figure in paper (Fig. 132), and then takes a pin, repeats the name of each of her late visitors in turn, pricking the paper figure at the mention of each name. When she has repeated all the names she sets the figure on fire, saying to her child; "Look at it, look at it!" When it is consumed, she takes a piece of alum, rubs it on the child's forehead, and then places it in a fire, over which she passes the child seven times. When the alum is burnt out, leaving only a charred substance, the mother takes it out of

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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remove it, or its *'afrīt* would for ever haunt the house. As it was a hopeless case I gave my servant a revolver and told him to shoot the dog. This he did, but he first took it away to a more distant spot.

While I was in Egypt in 1925 a poor man who came to trade in the village in which I was staying was drowned. He had gone to the Baḥr el-Yūsuf canal to perform his ablutions before his morning prayers, but the water was deeper than he thought, and he was unable to swim. No one was near at the time, it being very early in the morning. As he did not return people went down to the canal to look for him, and found his clothes on the bank. A large crowd collected, but nothing was done till early in the afternoon. The officials had been informed of the accident, but no doubt more pressing business detained them, and in any case they had to come from some distance. I went down and mixed with the crowd. The man's wife, mother, and little son were standing close to the water's edge, accompanied by numbers of sympathizers. The women were gesticulating and wailing, as they always do after a death, and were waving the blue and black handkerchiefs used on such occasions. "O my father! O camel of the house!"[1] they cried. A boat was manned by two or three men with a line, to which large fishing-hooks were attached, by means of which they hoped to hook up the body. They had been searching one portion of the canal in this way for some time, with no result, when I suggested that they should try another part, in the direction of which the current was flowing. They followed my advice, and very soon found the body. It was placed on the shore and immediately surrounded by a large crowd, which, after some time, dispersed, and then I saw the mother and wife of the dead man, one seated at the head and the other at the feet. I was strongly reminded of the ancient representations of Isis and Nephthys bewailing the dead Osiris. After this accident I was told by some of the villagers that no woman would go alone to fill her water-jar at that spot for fear of the drowned man's *'afrīt*, which would always remain in the water. It might be a good *'afrīt*, and then it would do no injury; but—who could tell?—it might be bad!

A few years ago some women in a neighbouring village had gone

[1] The camel, being a beast of burden and a means of livelihood among the peasants, typifies the breadwinner of the family.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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Upper Egypt

'AFARIT

A few years ago some women in a neighboring village had gone to the Gizeh canal to fill their water-jars. One of them, thinking it would be pleasant to have a bathe, for the weather was very hot, took off her clothes and went right into the water, dancing about with her water-jar on her head. Suddenly she cried out and started wailing, as she felt that she was being drawn under the water. No one made any effort to save her, as they said that an *'afrīt* of some drowned person had caught her by her hair and was dragging her down. They believed that if one of them attempted to save her he or she would probably be caught also—and, besides, the *'afrīt* wanted her and must have her!

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
COPTS MR10

thus thrown away. I have not as yet come across this custom myself.

On this day most of the people rise very early and go into the fields, spending the entire day out of doors. The men, at any rate in Fayūm Province, usually bathe in the Yūsuf Canal, the water of which is supposed to possess special *barakeh* on this occasion.[1]

On *Yōm Sabt en-Nūr*—the Sabbath, or Saturday, of the Light—people of both sexes and of all ages put into their eyes a small

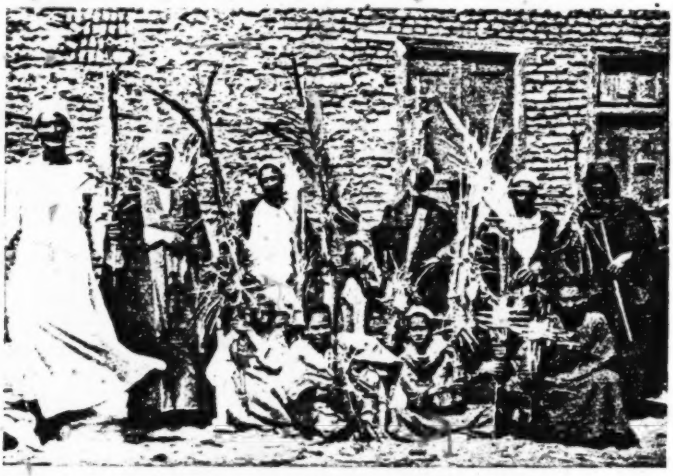

FIG. 149. PALM-BRANCHES PLAITED INTO VARIOUS SHAPES, USED IN A COPTIC CHURCH ON PALM SUNDAY

quantity of powder made from the placenta of a cat dried and pounded.[2] It is believed to make the eyes beautiful. To be told that you have the eyes of a cat is a great compliment (see p. 220).

On the Coptic Palm Sunday it is the custom to plait the leaves of palm-branches, without their being removed from the mid-rib, into a variety of forms, many of which are very intricate. Sometimes a round loaf of Eucharistic bread is enclosed within the plaited leaves. These palm-branches are taken to the church for the service held on this occasion. The illustration (Fig. 149) shows a group of men holding their palms, which they had taken to the church belonging to a Coptic monastery in the desert close

[1] See p. 33.

[2] *Cf.* E. W. Lane, *op. cit.*, vol. ii, p. 223.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
Ancient Egypt MR5

THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

in an inscription of Ramesses III at Medīnet Habu,[1] and the Egyptian peasants seem to have been wearing a garment very like the latter, only sleeveless, by the early Ptolemaic period, judging from the reliefs in the tomb of Petosiris at Derweh ;[2] but the *gallabīyeh* may date back even to the Sixth Dynasty.[3] It should be observed that women wearing veils on their heads like those worn by the modern peasant women in many parts of Egypt occur several times in those reliefs in the tomb of Petosiris that are executed in Greek style.[4]

It might here be mentioned that blue was the colour for mourning in ancient Egypt,[5] and that dark blue as well as black is still the mourning colour in modern Egypt (see pp. 50, 111, 264, 295).

I have not, as I should, referred in the previous chapters to the custom of washing before and after a meal and before private and public prayers. This is a very old custom and is often referred to in the ancient Egyptian literary and religious texts.[6]

It was evidently considered as important to have a large family in ancient as it is in modern Egypt (see p. 97). The sage Anii advises his son to "take a wife when thou art a youth, that she may give thee a son. Thou shouldst beget him for thee whilst thou art yet young, and shouldst live to see him become a man [?]. Happy is the man who hath much people, and he is respected because of his children."[7]

Several of the ceremonies connected with birth can be shown to be of ancient origin. Apart from the reference in the Old Testament,[8] the existence of professional midwives in ancient Egypt is suggested by the account of the birth of the divinely begotten triplets of Red-djedet in the tales of *King Kheops and the Magicians*, which dates from the time of the Twelfth Dynasty (2000–1788 B.C.).[9] In earliest times the Egyptian women squatted to

[1] J. H. Breasted, *Ancient Records*, vol. iv (Chicago, 1906), § 47.
[2] M. G. Lefebvre, *Tombeau de Petosiris*, vol. iii (Cairo, 1924), Pls. XII–XV.
[3] See W. M. F. Petrie, *Deshasheh* (London, 1898), pp. 31 f.
[4] M. G. Lefebvre, *op. cit.*, Pls. XIX, XX, XLXVI.
[5] A. H. Gardiner, *Zeitschrift für ägyptische Sprache*, vol. xlvii, pp. 162 f.
[6] For a number of interesting references see A. M. Blackman, "Purification (Egyptian)," in Hastings, *op. cit.*, vol. x, pp. 477, 480 f., *Luxor and its Temples*, p. 7, *Journal of Egyptian Archæology*, vol. v, pp. 153, 154 and note 5.
[7] A. Erman, *op. cit.*, p. 235.
[8] Exodus i, 16.
[9] A. Erman, *op. cit.*, pp. 44 ff.

F 304 Sometimes, though less commonly nowadays, young girls have the clitoris excised. In some regions boys have their right ears pierced.

The fellaheen do not gash their cheeks like the Nubians (Berberines), but they colour themselves, especially by tattooing, which is perhaps the main distinguishing mark of the fellaheen, and is applied to men and women alike in adolescence.

In the middle of the forehead or the chin, on the temples or the backs of the hands, appear dots or geometrical patterns; F [532] and on the chest, back or forearm there may be rough designs, such as a sword or tree, a name or a date, and for the Copts C [532 a cross more or less floriated. This tattooing is rarely found 304] lower than the waist, and is never obscene.

F 304 The work is done by a specialist, usually a Bedouin of 463 the same sex as the patient. The operation takes place in the open, at a street corner on market-day. The method is very primitive and causes painful swellings. The t[illegible]ooer traces the lines of the pattern selected at a chosen [illegible]n the skin with a *style* made of five to seven needles bound together, or with a sort of pricking stamp. Then he colours the bleeding pattern with lamp-black mixed in oil or spirit. An indelible greenish tint is thus obtained.

F 302 The use of henna (*lawsonia inermis*) to dye the hair, hands, feet or perhaps only the nails, is a characteristically Egyptian affectation. It goes back to the Twentieth Dynasty, and Islam has encouraged it (37). The application of henna is a delicate affair. A poultice, made with the powdered leaves, has to be applied hot and kept on from three to twenty-four hours according to quality. This produces a reddish-orange or brown colouring, which lasts about a fortnight.

F 302 Widows dye their hair with henna, to appear younger and attract a second husband. Young women use it to 587 clean their heads and kill lice, to stop hair from coming 515 out, and to make themselves pretty. The shaven heads of children are reddened with henna as a hygienic precaution. The hands, feet and fingernails of the women are only so coloured once or twice a year, at the great festivals.

F 302 *Kohl* (38) is used to blacken the eyelids and eyebrows, and make the eyes look larger; its function is both decorative

and hygienic. There is no woman who does not use this inexpensive cosmetic, both for herself and for her children. On a holiday or when she is tired, she neatly applies it with a kind of stylet dipped into the phial of black. 302

Circumcision is a therapeutic, tattooing a scarification, henna a poultice, *kohl* an eye-salve; for these aesthetic devices also serve the fellaheen as preventives or remedies. At the same time they also represent magical rites: circumcision is an act of consecration, tattooing has a symbolic value, henna is a commemorative, *kohl* keeps off the evil eye. Thus a luxury is never devoid of meaning or utility. 304 302 278 777

The fellaheen do not bathe for pleasure or for cleanliness. They have enough contact with water at their work, or in their Moslem ritual ablutions (30). Every evening these ablutions of hands, feet, face and private parts assure, at least to the men, a minimum of cleanliness. The children splash about naked as soon as they can, or whenever the beasts have to be watered. The women go into the water dressed and in groups, to wash their dirty clothes and themselves at the same time. For this they use clay or a piece of wood, and occasionally soap. In many villages the women never have a thorough wash, except on the occasion of their marriage, and once a year at the Great Bairam. 515 [857] [296]

The dress of the fellaheen constitutes the distinguishing mark of Egypt. While many everyday actions and customs are common to the peasantry of all countries, or at least to all those who are poor, or live in Moslem lands, the fellah differs from them all in his manner of dress, which is immediately recognisable. Yet there is nothing picturesque or fanciful about it, no complication or embroidery such as distinguishes the village dress of Syria and Palestine. 291

The men wear on their heads the simplest form of covering, a mere skull-cap, which gives no protection against the sun. This brownish felt cap or *libda* is so distinctive of the poor fellah that its very name has furnished him with a title. He is often called *abu libda*, the fellow with a cap, figuring in many a popular tale. Sometimes, and in the case of boys almost always, the cap is made of white calico (*taqiya*). On special occasions, if the fellah is better off or more pious, particularly in the south, he will wind round his cap a long white cloth which serves to protect his neck. This is due to Moslem influence. A good *libda* is deep, and should come

(3) *Health and Sickness*

291 The fellah's clothes are no more of a barrier against the elements than his work. They cut him off from neither air nor sun, earth nor water. This absorption into his environment gives him abundance of physical life. His robust 142 and hardy constitution is in harmony with nature. For 513 sleep he needs no mattress, no comfort. He bears the most 151 brutal incisions without a cry. Colds, headaches and the foulest odours trouble him not at all. His appetite never fails, and his extremely sensitive hearing catches the slightest sound, human or other.

164 Very often, unfortunately, Nature turns treacherously upon him and infects his unsuspecting body with diseases which fatten and undermine him. These are endemic diseases which are rooted in the peasant class. Let us say nothing of tuberculosis or hereditary syphilis, which are the fellah's constant companions. Far more dangerous are bilharzia, ankylostomiasis (hookworm) and malaria, which in some *mudiriyas* affect more than 80% of the population. ● [515] These arise from lack of cleanliness, and too close a contact between man and the soil.

But the most noticeable are the eye-diseases. Though the greenness of the fields is restful to the sight, the heat and glare of the sun and still more the thick dust which no rain ever lays, the sandy wind from the hardby desert, the dung, the flies, and dirty fingers all combine from childhood to inflame and infect the eyes, if not to blind them. It is impossible to pass through a village without being struck by the number of blind and one-eyed people going about. According to statistics they amount to 60% of the population. In 1927 it was officially recorded that there were 266,550 one-eyed people and 110,000 completely blind. In 1937 the provinces of Minia and Assiut were credited with 50,000 either one-eyed or blind. In actual fact there are more than that. There is no counting the bleary or bloodshot looks, the eyes dimmed by glaucoma or trachoma.

Another scourge is *bilharzia*(**). This is a form of haematuria caused by a parasite which is absorbed into the system through the skin. The fellaheen make their ritual ablutions [515 daily, often side by side, in any sort of water, and work bare- 744] foot on the damp earth or in the mud of the drains. The larva of this parasite, which is peculiar to Egypt, grows

own habits often neutralise the treatment he receives, so 743
that these diseases remain as deep-rooted as ever in the 744
peasant class. If only they would pay attention, until 164
more can be done, to the advice and directions which are given them! The answer is that even if they tried they could not hope to succeed, because the conditions under which they live are at every point unfavourable to the attempt. Here lies the heart of the problem.

(4) *Food and Drink*

Water is the first problem; not this time considered for 271
its use in irrigation, which has been studied over and over [132]
again, but as a much more vital need in supplying human nourishment. Egypt is a hot country, and the fellah's work makes him sweat, so that thirst affects him more than most other people.

Where the owner of an *'ezba* has installed a pump, the 271
fellaheen may get their water from an artesian well. If 312
their village is on the river bank, they will use water from the Nile, which is silty but fresh-running. But more often than not they can drink only brackish and stagnant water from the irrigation canals.

In these, men and animals cleanse and relieve them- [296
selves; vegetables, clothes, and crockery are washed, and [515
carrion is thrown away: and this is the place to which women 364]
come to get "drinking water". They bring it home in the early evening, in their ewers or tins, to fill up the great pot, 271
or *zir*, that stands against the house wall. Each fellaha 415
brings back about six gallons each evening for the next day's use. This water she adds to what already remains in the *zir*, so that the bottom is never dry, and never cleaned. The water stands all night, so that some of the dirt settles. It also cools, owing to evaporation through the porous clay. As for the drops which filter through, and which might be used to fill the drinking-pots with pure water for the morning, they simply run to waste in puddles or are drunk by the fowls.

The Government, however, is busily studying the question of supplying drinking-water to the villages, and numerous plans have been made.

Men have always added something to water to give it a 273
taste. The fellah is no exception. Wine he does not drink,

with no crumb. There are no public bakeries except in the towns, but every family bakes its own bread two or three times a week. In Upper Egypt the fellah's loaf is rather smaller, being about six inches across, though thicker. A labourer in the district of Armant told the author that he used to eat ten a day.

The ordinary food of the fellah, then, consists of bread, which he makes from maize of his own growing, and vegetables from the edge of his field, or others of poorer quality that his wife buys at the market, with the occasional addition of cheese, when not all the milk of the *gamoossa* has been sold. Briefly, he eats the cheapest products obtainable in the neighbourhood.

His diet is neither varied nor abundant. Does this mean that he is underfed? It is certainly the usual view. On the other hand, one authority (**) finds that the foods—and even the water — which make up the fellah's diet contain a normal mineral content. The work, health and physical strength of the fellah seem to confirm this opinion, yet the increase of pellagra, and the very high proportion (perhaps 80%) of recruits for military service turned down, would seem to prove malnutrition.

So the black soil, like the tongue in Aesop's proverb, is at once the best and the worst of things, giving the fellah both strength and sickness.

The mineral content of the food crops that it nourishes strengthens the men who eat them.

The germs and parasites which infect the sodden soil weaken the men who live on it and drink from it.

From this interplay of natural forces, in spite of everything, a certain balance has been set up which has made the fellaheen a sturdy stock.

This is what justifies the view that the fellah's greatest affliction does not lie in lack of cleanliness, in disease, high mortality, or all the physical distress so far described, and to be further studied under the heading of housing. His real misery lies elsewhere.

material is used, that is to say the nearest available earth. Thus large holes have been created, which have been dug deeper and wider, and have then filled up with water. These are the *birkas* or village ponds, which serve as drinking-troughs for animals, as swimming-pools for children, and sometimes as sources of water for the housewife.

The Government has had fifty-odd of these hotbeds of disease filled in, not without meeting opposition from the fellaheen, whose habits and customs have thus been disturbed. Eighteen such ponds needed 10,000 cubic metres of earth.

Not far from the *birka*, still outside the village, is the *gurn*, or winnowing and threshing-floor. This is a flat patch of ground covered with cow-dung and earth, which has been levelled and trodden down. Its size is proportionate to the number of families that use it. The *gurn* is common property, and nobody can appropriate it. It is big enough for ten groups to work at a time, until all have winnowed their corn. It also serves as a public square for meetings, though often an adjacent piece of waste ground supplements it for this purpose. Not far away can be seen a great rubbish heap made of dirt, dung and carrion. This heap would overtop the houses, if the dogs and birds of prey did not come regularly to reduce it, and if the fellaheen did not take manure from it. It would be an even greater danger to public health than the *birka*, if the sun did not disinfect it.

Still outside the village, particularly in the Fayum and in Middle Egypt, there may be square towers, as much as thirty feet high, banded in black and white. Their heavy base, seven yards by four, gives them the appearance of forts, but they are in fact pigeon-cotes. You can see them assailed, at sunset, each by a cloud of from fifteen to twenty thousand pigeons coming back to roost after feeding among the fields. The construction of these "houses", requiring an outlay of from L.E. 200 to L.E. 300 each, is a specialised trade. It is beyond the means of our fellaheen, and can be undertaken only by an *omda* or big landowner. In the South a pigeon-cote is often built on a corner of the rooftop, thus raising the skyline of the village; but as a rule these houses with pigeon-cotes, whether built-on or independent, do not form part of the village itself. They stand apart, and can be distinguished by their extra storey, their more pretentious appearance, and their gardens. Such are the owner's villa on an *ezba*, or

I go visiting my parishioners", says Mgr Khouzam, Bishop of Thebes, "I find few houses with doors. They have square holes for entrances, and these are the only openings. The sole furniture is an oven for bread, a jar of water, a cooking pot and a bowl. In a few houses there is a cord stretched across a corner from wall to wall. This is the wardrobe, where spare clothes are hung. The roof is so low as to be oppressive".

Fortunately, houses normally have two, if not three, rooms. (**) Apart from slight variations in plan, size and arrangement, these usually comprise:

1. A hall (*mandara*). Against the right-hand wall is built a long raised seat (*mastaba*). As the outside door opens into it, this is the best-lighted room in the house. It is used for visitors and guests.

2. Opening into this is the combined sleeping-room and kitchen. In a corner is the oven, built of bricks and set against the wall. Its flat top forms a kind of bed, on which two people sleep in winter. There is no chimney. The smoke escapes by the loophole in the wall.

3. Further in still is a little yard (*zariba*) about six foot wide and partly covered with maize thatch. This serves as a stable for the *gamoossa* and the donkey, but can be approached only through the front door.

The distinction is not very rigid, and there is nothing to prevent the sitting-room from serving as a stable, or the yard as summer sleeping-quarters. The fowls live everywhere; the pigeons nest in niches in the outer wall, or in petrol tins piled together. In villages where there is a Coptic majority, the pigs must also be taken into account; the Christian fellaheen rear these, not for themselves, but for European pork-butchers. As often as not, we must add that friend of the fellah and guardian of his goods, his shaggy night-howling dog.

The floor of the house is of beaten earth. The furniture is heaped up in disorder in the corners. For meals there is a Primus stove, one or two copper cooking-pots, and a low round table of white wood about three feet wide and eighteen inches high. For sleeping there are straw mats, a few cotton coverlets, or perhaps only a big sack. Sometimes there are beds constructed of palm branches (in the same way as chicken coops) and perhaps a cotton-stuffed mattress. For household

and toilet use there is a large flat tub (*tisht*) which serves as both laundry-basin and bath, a fragment of mirror, and a big wooden chest which may hold almost anything. This was a gift at the betrothal, and its crude colours are reminders of a red-letter day. "In this chest near the oven, whose key the mistress of the house wears at her neck, I have seen all jumbled together eggs, pepper, cheese, rags, needles and thread, several necklaces and a packet of *kohl*." This from the letter of a surprised French missionary.

The close proximity of men, cattle and soil is as noticeable in the fellah's house as in the field and the village. It is a reflection of the fellah's social level and manner of life. Like house, like household.

The fellah's dependence on soil, sun and water extends even to his house. He himself is of the earth, earthy, through his labour and his food, in his diseases and finally in his death. His house no less, by the material of which it is made — floor, walls, roof and all — and by its very squatness is a part of the earth.

The fellah lives out of doors because of the lack of comfort in his home, which is no more than an unfurnished sleeping-place and a store-room, a part of the crowded camp which is the village.

All the houses are alike. The fellaheen have little individuality; each is an atomised unit of the mass, and his household but one cell in the agricultural hive. At the same time there is little or no space reserved for agricultural uses. The fellah works for others, and does not store the produce of the land for himself.

Yet this dwelling, which lacks so much that we deem essential, is so well adapted to its tenants and their habits that they will change or rather deform into its likeness any better-appointed house built for them on a model *'ezba*.

A house on an *'ezba* belongs to the owner, one in the village to the fellah. House and site together are worth at the most L.E. 25. There is no rent or house tax to pay. On an *'ezba* the dwelling enters into the conditions of lease or share-tenancy. In the village it belongs to the head of the family.

In this homestead scarcely larger than himself the fellah leads a life of his own, no longer as a serf but as a master. Each house contains a large family, including very often, besides the father and mother, four or five children, a grand-

585 The bridegroom too has made himself ready. He
[515] has had a bath in his best friend's house. His best clothes have been brought, and the *mizayen* has come to groom him and put henna on his hands. Outside a crowd of people are waiting for him to come out. At last he is ready. His men friends ring him round with candles, and a torchlight procession begins. He holds a white handkerchief over his face as if to mask himself, as they strike up songs of love and pleasure (*mawâwîl*), which mingle with the sound of shots. Meanwhile the women throw pinches of salt over the men. When the family house is reached, the bridegroom's friends snatch him from the crowd and drag him in. The young bride is already waiting, surrounded by the women who have tested her virginity, and the marriage is consummated without much secrecy. In the street outside, amidst the cries of the crowd, singing and dancing goes on all night and all the next day. Coloured sweets and treacly pastries are
[262] handed round. On this day there is no thought of economy. After his marriage the young man spends a week or a fortnight without going to work, and during this time he is called "Prince" (*amîr*).

592 The household is thus begun, but for several years more
606 the couple will be dependent on the husband's family. If
554 the wife is clever, obeys her mother-in-law, and bears her
595 husband many male children, he will not take another wife. The same will happen if he is poor, and cannot afford the expenses of another wedding.

595 It is perfectly legal for a Moslem to have four wives, or
586 to divorce. But the fellah makes little use of this Koranic
178 liberty. In the last ten years a considerable decline has been noted in polygamy and divorce. The reason, according to a provincial official, is not so much the progress of civilisation as the increasing poverty of the fellaheen. Lower Egypt being richer, more bigamous marriages are recorded there than in Upper Egypt.

586 Divorce is carried out merely by repeating three times the words of repudiation (*talaq*). Nothing could be easier, but as he is obliged to pay maintenance to the divorced wife, and a new dowry to the one who takes her place, the fellah usually keeps to one wife. Other details also enter
162 into the matter. Statistics show that the country population
585 comprises almost as many men as women. For the whole

361
185
654 rows there is a street six yards wide, so that sunlight can penetrate into every dwelling.

361 The houses are of red brick, with concrete ceilings,
185 and the floors inside are raised a foot above street level.
654 The roof is about thirteen feet from the ground. Twenty of
342 the houses are two-roomed, with a yard inside and a shed for cattle. Ten larger houses have three rooms, with a hall and outhouses. These are occupied by two families each, usually those of a father and his son.

[252 Six baking-ovens have been built outside the housing-
515] area, so that the smoke may not trouble the inhabitants. They are used by all the families in turn. There are also six shower-baths, four for men and two for women, together with laundry facilities.

[346] The village hall will hold seventy people; it is used for feasts, marriages and funerals. The mosque covers about 600 square feet. The school, which follows the syllabus [347] for compulsory elementary education, is open to boys and girls. Shops have been opened in order that the people may buy what they want on the spot, and there is a great enclosure with six depots for storing the various crops, fodder for the animals, and agricultural implements.

[312] Water to fill the tanks is drawn from a well by a pumping machine. But this was an expensive experiment, costing L.E. 10,000, and could not be copied by private persons. Something more economical had to be found, which without sacrificing public health would be better adapted to the habits of the fellaheen. In 1935 the Royal Agricultural Society laid a new experiment before the landowners. Twenty houses of different kinds were built in blocks of four, separated by twenty-foot roads. Here the walls are of unbaked brick, and the roof of wood. There are two rooms about fifteen feet by twelve, a small yard, and an inside oven. Each dwelling costs L.E. 25 as against the L.E. 125 of the first plan.

654 The Government, for its part, has decided to build a
341 model village in each *mudiriya*, beginning with the rebuild-
361 ing of Mit Fares in Lower Egypt, which was destroyed by fire. The plan allows for houses of one or two stories with drinking-water and interior drainage; wide streets lined with trees; in the centre a mosque, a school, and a hall for meetings; and on the outskirts a market-place for the

Greek, not satisfied with building good houses of red brick and concrete at L.E. 120 each, has arranged for a dentist and a doctor to come every week from the town. He has established a model school, and, best of all, has engaged an assistant for social work. This young Egyptian woman, the first to hold a diploma from the Alexandria School of Social Service, lives not in the owner's villa or the *nâzer's* house but among the fellaheen and close to the school, in a little room which she has fitted up charmingly. At 8 a.m. she opens her dispensary, and at 9 a.m. pays a medical visit to the school. Then she makes a round of the houses, gently discouraging dirt and disorder. She keeps a card-index of each family, and records its progress. She brings the girls together for lessons in child-welfare and sewing, and in the evening assembles the men to tell them stories and teach them how to amuse themselves in their spare time.

At the end of the first year, thanks to the fact that this service was continuous and close at hand, the women of the *'ezba* were washing themselves once a week, though they used only to take a bath once a year. This is because Doreyya did not make speeches to them about bath-tubs and shower-baths, but simply used what every peasant woman has at hand in her home, the *tisht*, the *halla* and the *kûz*.

Then there is the earlier example of a remarkable *ab'adiya* (isolated farm) in the *mârkaz* of Simbellawain. This 400-feddan estate, worked by direct cultivation, has been made by its *nâzer*, an Alsatian of good peasant stock who has been living and working there for twenty-seven years, into a paradise of order and health. The fellaheen are lodged in thirty-six small houses varying in size according to the number of children. They are built of red brick, with wooden roofs. The inside is newly white-washed every year. Nothing is kept on the roof, but each family has an adjoining patch of land, defined by an imaginary line, where dry brushwood and manure are heaped. Nobody encroaches on another's space. The labourers are paid three and a half to four piastres more than on neighbouring estates. They are each allowed one or two feddans for their requirements of maize or berseem, and almost every family owns a donkey and a goat, and either a calf or a *gamoossa*. Once a year everyone receives a new garment at the owner's

expense, which amounts to about L.E. 70. These *gallabiyas* are not distributed anyhow, but fitted individually by the *nâzer's* wife, according to height and taste. At the Bairam festival there is a general distribution of meat, four pounds to a person, which costs about L.E. 40. Fat is also given to those who have no *gamoossa*. The fruit crop of the orchard is shared out at intervals. Whenever a child is born, a set of baby-clothes is provided.

When a fellah gets into debt, the *nâzer* advances him what he needs, without any trickery. The man pays it off by days of work.

Drinking-water is supplied to all from a pump at the entrance to the *'ezba*. A dozen lavatories and two shower-baths have been set up near the mosque.

This beautiful mosque, built by the Christian landowner, who also provides for an *imam*, brings together the menfolk of the *'ezba* and its surroundings. A *kuttab* was attached to it, but this has been closed since the opening of an *ilzamiya* school in the next village.

Fellaheen who go sick are cared for by the *nâzer*, who has by practice become something of a doctor, or sent to the Government doctor at Mit Ghamr. The wife of this kindly manager, when she was there, used to take care of the people herself, wash their eyes, and give them clothes and good habits too. For twenty-four years she stood at her husband's side.

When she died, they showed that fellaheen are not incapable of gratitude. They discovered by childish tricks, in spite of efforts to keep the truth from them, that she was seriously ill in Cairo. Thirty of them piled into a couple of taxis and drove off to the hospital. It was like a public demonstration, people said. Later, when they saw the *nâzer* and his children coming back in mourning from the cemetery, their grief was as spontaneous as it was general.

This mother left her daughter an example to follow. And follow it she does, with her gentleness and good temper and h[illegible]nastery of Arabic. It is easy to see how much they love [illegible] those unloved peasants.

This experiment in social justice has not made either the owner or the *nâzer* any the poorer. The estate is one of the most productive in Egypt, and all its products have won prizes at agricultural exhibitions.

PEASANT FUNERALS

764
133
291

Men and Women

A PEASEANT FAMILY

515
585
292
352
231
415

A head toilet.

The wedding procession

39. *T.*—This is not quite true. Fellaheen are frequently to be seen in the Nile and in the canals, swimming and splashing about for pleasure after a hot day's work. [113 515 526]

40. *T.*—In 1943 the cheaper cotton stuffs were selling at a controlled price of P.T. 6 a metre, and a tailor would ask at least 15 piastres for the work. [463 435]

41. *T.*—At Akhmîm and Nagada in Upper Egypt a considerable weaving-industry still flourishes. The latter has a considerable trade with the Sudan. [288]

42. Dr. Theodore Bilharz (d. 1862) was a German lecturer at the Cairo School of Medicine. In 1858 he solved the mystery of this endemic disease by discovering the parasite that causes it, and thus made attack upon it possible. [744]

43. Department of Public Health : REPORTS AND NOTES ON ANKYLOSTOMIASIS AND BILHARZIASIS IN EGYPT: Government Press, Cairo, 1924,

This work contains a complete bibliography on the two diseases, with an account of their ravages in various villages of Egypt, and of the Government's attempts to fight them.

44. Ibnet ish-Shaty' : EL-RIF EL MASRI (THE EGYPTIAN COUNTRYSIDE), p. 125.

45. In 1935 Egypt imported 7,888 tons of coffee beans from Java, Santos and Yemen. [439]

46. See the ANNUAL REPORT for 1938 of the Central Bureau of Information on Narcotics. However, in a technical essay in the REVUE DES QUESTIONS SOCIALES (July 1940, pp. 94-106) entitled IS BLACK TEA HARMFUL TO THE HEALTH AND WORK OF THE PEASANTRY ? the author (who remains anonymous) feels justified in giving a negative answer. [272]

47. The famous Egyptian cigarettes are all made of imported tobacco. The intention was to avoid the danger of hasheesh as well as to gratify the Turkish Government. (The smoking of very cheap cigarettes has now become extremely common among the fellaheen. - *T.*, 1945.) [276]

48. BAMIA and MOLOKHIA are two mucilaginous plants. The former, known in British colonies as OKRA, is [241 262]

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

18.

539x 854

One of the songs with which the mothers quiet the little ones, and in which one often seeks in vain for the connection. This song, with a few variations, was heard by Goldziher in Cairo in 1873. (Zeitschrift der Deutschen morgenlaendischen Gesellschaft 33, p. 612.)

Ya naṭara, ṣubbīha,
ḫalli-l-wizz yeʿūm fīha.
Bint uḫti ʾarʿa ʾarʿa,
ḫadha-d-dīb u-raḥ yirʿa,
ʾarʾaša taḥt et-tirʿa.

O Rain, pour it out!
Let the geese go swimming in it!
My little niece is scab-headed, scab-headed, [164]
The wolf has caught her and gone to eating,
He has gnawed her to pieces in the canal.

1. Compare No. 17, l. 2.

2. Let it rain hard enough to form puddles, in which geese can swim.

3. Owing to the filth in which the country children grow [515] up, scabby heads are not rare.

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

512 562 groan and languish under the burden of their daily labours, yet they do not, as the common descriptions of harem life lead us to believe, recline the live-long day on the soft divan enjoying the *dolce far niente*, adorned with gold and jewels, smoking, and supporting upon the yielding pillow those arms that indolence makes so plump, while the eunuchs and female slaves stand before them watching their every sign, and anxious to spare them the slightest movement. Such slothful dames may indeed be found here and there in the harems of the great, but are not confined to this country. People fall again and again into the mistake of comparing the life of the women of our middle ranks with that of those that occupy the harems of the great! The care of house and family lies much more heavily upon the women here, and there is enough to attend to even if, being assisted by female slaves, as is the case in the higher ranks, they have not to put to their hands themselves, and confine themselves only to giving orders. Cooking, baking, sewing, embroidering, washing, and scouring must be carried on, and children must be attended to here as well as elsewhere—there is no reading nor pianoforte playing, however.

[513] Before sunrise women and children are already awake and moving, many indeed under cover of the dark gray dawn proceed to the river to bathe and wash themselves. ●515 The toilette, however, is not usually the first thing that demands attention; [512] the kitchen must first be attended to in order to let the husband away to his occupation. A complete toilette including combing and plaiting of the hair is not in many cases indulged in every day even among ladies of the better class. In this way time and trouble are spared, but a certain class of vermin are left almost unmolested, and establish themselves often so firmly among the black locks of the Eastern beauties that they cannot be extirpated notwithstanding the raids that are made upon them from time to time—even with the application of gray mercurial ointment. As a rule the toilette is associated with a bath, to which praiseworthy enjoyment high and [368] low are attached, whether it be taken in the public bathing establishment, in the river, the sea, or at home by means of

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

a shallow tub, and by pouring warm water over the body and scrubbing it with soap and date bast. In the public baths certain hours or days are set apart for the fair sex, and here many women spend half days bathing, adorning themselves, smoking, and gossiping. At these times no male, not even a eunuch would dare to set foot in the apartments.

In other respects also the women are by no means robbed of social pleasures. They visit each other often enough, if possible early in the morning, and are wont to remain half a day, a whole day, or even several days, though both parties may be in the same town. They smoke, drink coffee (the latter being less in use among the women than among the men—the opposite to what holds good among the Franks), gossip, show their ornaments and finery, tell stories and wonderful tales, sew, embroider (but do not knit), sing and dance, or better, make some one sing and dance before them (since a well-conducted lady ought neither to be seen nor heard, and therefore should not sing), laugh and make merry —in short the harem so greatly pitied elsewhere enjoy life, but on the sole condition, that no man be present! They are less often allowed to take a walk in the open air; some—and this is considered a great virtue—never leave the house after their marriage. Their lady friends come to visit them instead, and as almost every house in these regions has its court-yard or a terrace, women are by no means kept out of the open air. Moslim women are generally excused from the burdensome prayers of the men, and pious or even hypocritical women are in the Moslim female world a great rarity; indeed they scarcely know the most important doctrines of their religion. Piety in them is even looked upon with dislike.

At mid-day the husband always eats alone, or with his boys or guests. Immediately afterwards, however, the wife again comes into honour since her lord likes to enjoy his siesta in the chambers of the harem. After sunset no respectable woman must show herself outside the house, even though veiled and attended, and now, or some hours later, the husband

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

rank they hold in the intellectual world is not a consequence of want of understanding, but of want of knowledge; it is a consequence of their stagnating religion, and of the hostility of former governments to enlightenment. Besides being forbidden between very near relatives, marriage is also forbidden between such as have been suckled at the same breast. Among the ancient Egyptians, as already mentioned, marriages were permitted even between brothers and sisters.

At the preliminary betrothal the marriage contract is made between the fathers or guardians on both sides. The father agrees to pay to the father-in-law of his son a certain sum, and part of this is paid at once, the other part is always tied up and settled upon the wife in case she should happen to be divorced. These payments, however, must not be understood as if the parents were simply selling their daughter; the "bride's treasure" is in most cases spent on clothes and ornaments for the bride, and the bridegroom often gives these directly instead of money. And the bride who brings nothing to her husband except her person, lays up for herself from this bride's treasure a fund for cases of misfortune. If the wife has any independent means she does not share it with her husband—it remains her personal property. In the East, accordingly, mercenary marriages—so incompatible with manly dignity—are unknown.

On the evening of the wedding-day is held the marriage banquet, on which great sums are often expended by the more wealthy. Everybody in the place is invited to the house of the bride's parents; whole hecatombs (this is often literally correct) of sheep are slaughtered and devoured with a rapidity that has become proverbial, and with the most voracious appetite. Only the very poorest confine themselves to inviting none but the members of their intimate family circle.

In the course of the day the bride and bridegroom frequently take a bath, to which they often proceed in grand procession. In other cases the bridegroom, when evening has come, takes off his clothes in front of the house before the gaping crowds, and has his whole body soaped and bathed by the barber. The chief festivity does not take place, however, until nightfall.